

THE REHEARSAL.

1. Of *Universal Redemption*.
2. Exemplify'd in a *Familiar Instance*.
3. Of falling from *Grace*. A Remarkable *Instance* in *Oliver* when he Dy'd.
4. No *Sin* in the *Elect*. Argument against *Repentance*, and *Good Works*.
5. The *Effect* of these *Principles*. In a *Particular Congregation* at *London*.
6. Dr. *Edwards* his *Veritas Redux*.

WEDNESDAY, August 20. 1707.

(1.) *Rehearsal*. **T**Here is one Point remaining that follows from that of *Predestination* we have been upon, in which I would have you, *Country-man*, to be well Grounded, and therefore must Examine you a little upon it. These *Predestinarians* placing all upon the *Eternal Decrees* of *Election* and *Reprobation*, allow not of *Universal Redemption*, or that *Christ* Dy'd for All. Because, say they, if *Christ* Dy'd for the *Reprobate*, it was totally in vain, and the End of his *Sufferings* must be Frustrated as to them. Besides that he cou'd not intend or Design to Save those whom God had Reprobated by an *Eternal Decree*. Now let me see what you have to say to this.

Country-man. As to *Eternal Decrees*, enough has been said to that already, That ther is no Arguing from it, being only words ad *Captum*, and therefore not to be Strickly and Properly taken. So I dismifs that Point.

But now as to *Universal Redemption*, the Scripture is Plain, which says, That *Christ* Died for All. And wou'd have None to Perish, but All to Come to the knowlege of the Truth. And as in *Adam* all Dye, even so in *Christ* shall all be made Alive. And many other such like Texts.

Rehers. But all are not made Alive, that is, in *Christ*, so as to be Saved, for many Perish.

Country-m. Yet *Christ* Dy'd even for those who Perish. As it is said 1. Cor. viii. 11. in the Case of giving Scandal to a weak Brother. And through thy Knowlege shall the Weak Brother Perish, for whom *Christ* died.

(2.) Now I help my self to Understand this, by a familiar Example. Suppose you came to a *Prison*, and taking a list of all the Debtors, shou'd pay all their Debts, Costs, Charges and all. And opening the *Prison-Doors* shou'd tell them, they were all at Liberty who wou'd Accept of it, and Come out

in such a Time. After which the *Prison Doors* shou'd be Lock'd again, and they shou'd be kept there, till they had paid the Uttermost farthing. Upon this, some Thankfully accept of your Goodness and Come out. But ther are others, who despise your Mercy, or will not Believe you, or Understand not the Pleasure of Liberty, but prefer the Sordid life of a *Prison*, the Pot and the Pipe, and will not Come out. Which is the very *Condemnation* our Saviour spoke of when he said, that Light was come into the World, but Men loved Darknes rather than the Light, because their Deeds were Evil. The Light was offer'd to All. But some lov'd Darknes better. It is said that Life and Death are set before Us, yet some chuse Death. A Habit of Sin contracts a Love to it, that we are Loath to Leave it.

The application is this: The Debt of those Prisoners who stay'd in the *Prison* was Pay'd as well as of those who came out. And as the Release of the one is wholly owing to him who Pay'd the Debt; so the *Condemnation* of the other, lies wholly at his own Door, because he wou'd not Accept of his Liberty. Something was left to the Prisoners to do, to Chuse whether they wou'd Come out, or Stay in. God will not Save us against our Will. This shews Free-Will. But ther is no Merit in Us, when we Accept of His Salvation. We pay not a Penny of the Debt, He pays it all: And all the Thanks and the Glory is to Him.

But if He did not Pay my Debt, how con'd I be Blam'd for staying in the *Prison*, when my Debt lay still upon me, that I con'd not get out? How cou'd I be Call'd Ungratefull to Him who Pay'd nothing for me, nor ever did Design it? And how can Wicked Men be Blam'd for Trampling under foot the Blood of the Son of God, for Despising and Resisting His Grace, if He shed no Blood for them, nor ever gave them any saving Grace?

(3.) *Rehears.* I desire Dr. Edwards to Answer this. But this brings me to another Point which follows in the Train of Consequences of these Mens Notion of *Predestination*. For from the *Eternal Decrees*, as they put it, they infer that there can be no Falling from *Grace*, because this might Defeat the *Decree*. And therefore that Men cannot finally *Resist* this *Grace*, or *Fall* from it.

This minds me of a Remarkable Passage told by Dr. Bates, who wrote the *Elenchus Motuum Nuperorum in Anglia*. He as a Physician was call'd upon to Assist that Night that *Oliver* provid'd a true Deliverer of his Country. The Protector was in Great Agonies of Mind, often Started, and ask'd them if they saw any thing? At length he Call'd for his Chaplains. And the first Question he ask'd them was, if there was any falling from *Grace*? To which being Answer'd in the Negative, then, said he, *I am safe*. For he suppos'd that some time or other in his Life he might have had a little *Grace*. And then his *Usurpation*, with the Murder of the King, and Devastation of three Kingdoms, besides much Blood shed Abroad, and the overthrow of the Establish'd Church, cou'd do him no Hurt! This is a Short way of Quieting Conscience! And to Lull Men Asleep in their Sins! Thus poor Souls are Deluded by these *Doctrins* of *Decrees*!

(4.) In Consequence of which it is a Maxim with them, that God sees no Sin in his Elect. Which is indeed, That the Elect cannot Sin. They say that David was nothing out of God's Favour while he Continu'd in his Sin, more than before he Committed it, or after he Repented.

Nay some of them have wrote Expressly against Repentance, as being a Derogation from the *Decrees* of God, and supposing them to be Conditional.

Whence others have likewise spoke against Good-Works. What! Do we think that any thing we can Do, can Reverse or Alter the *Decrees* of God?

And as they think the Elect cannot Sin, so they say that others can do nothing else but Sin. Thus the same Actions are Sin in one, and Piety in another. As the Poet said,

The Saints may do the same things by
The Spirit in Sincerity,
Which other Men are Tempted to,
And at the Devils instance do:
All Piety consists therein
In them, in other Men all Sin.

I have Read in a Book of one of their Celebrated Preachers a long Comparison betwixt *Esau* and *Jacob*, wherein *Esau* was set forth with all the Advantages of Worth and Honour, and *Jacob* represented as the Wickedest fellow upon Earth: And this use was made of it, That God Chose *Ja-*

cob before *Esau*, to shew that His *Decrees* were Absolute, and had no Respect to the Goodness or Wickedness of the Persons.

(5.) *Country-m.* Then it is all one whether we are Good or Wicked! Nay Wickedness has the Advantage in many Cases, as in this of *Esau* and *Jacob*! Master, these are monstrous Principles. And make me now no longer wonder at what one of their Eminent Preachers in London said since the Revolution, who being ask'd by some of his Brethren what Progress he had made, said he had made many Profelyts, and had a very full Congregation; but, added he, all the Effect I have found is, That I have Preach'd a Congregation of Christians into a Congregation of Devils. Perhaps not knowing the Cause, and that this was the natural Consequence of those Doctrins he had Preach'd to them.

And are these the Principles to which Dr. Edwards wou'd have us Reform'd Backwards over, by the Kirk in Scotland and in Holland coming in to the Aid of our Dissenters at Home? A blessed Confederacy!

(6.) *Rehears.* The Doctor has given the Onset himself, in a large Book he has lately Printed, call'd *Veritas Redux*, wherein these Principles are set up to the Height. He Heads the Armies of the Philistines, and Leads them on against the Camp of Israel.

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